

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: **PARKS, RECREATION AND RAILROAD**

DATE: APRIL 28, 2006

Committee Members Present:	Patrick Beland, Director, Parks, Recreation & Railroad Division
Supervisors Haskell	William Remington, Superintendent, Department of Public Works
Belden	Paul Butler, Recreation Facilities Manager
O'Connor	Mark McClain, Warren County Snowmobile Association
A. Gabriels	Harry Cronin, Lake Luzerne
VanNess	William H. Thomas, Chairman
F. Thomas	Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services
Stec	Marquel Johnson, Legislative Office Specialist
Geraghty	
Committee Member Absent:	
Supervisor Merlino	

Mr. Haskell called the meeting to order at 11:40 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, subject to correction by the clerk.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. Beland, Director, Parks, Recreation and Railroad, who distributed copies of his agenda packet to members of the committee, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Commencing with the first item on the Parks, Recreation & Railroad Agenda, Mr. Beland stated he was requesting an extension of the snowmobile agreement between the County of Warren, City of Glens Falls and the South Warren Snowmobile Club from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007. Previously there was an agreement between the City of Glens Falls, South Warren Snowmobile Club and International Paper (IP), he added. However, International Paper sold the recreational rights on various properties to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC); therefore, he commented, they were not going to enter into an agreement with IP. He said these snowmobile trails would become public trails which would possibly necessitate an agreement between DEC and South Warren Snowmobile Club.

Motion was made by Mr. Stec, seconded by Mr. Belden, authorizing an extension of the snowmobile agreements between the County of Warren, City of Glens Falls and the South Warren Snowmobile Club.

Mr. Belden queried what would happen to the leases if DEC did not allow recreational vehicles on this property and Mr. Beland responded the public recreational rights of that land had been sold to DEC allowing the snowmobile trails to continue but he said

he was unsure whether ATV's (all terrain vehicles) would be allowed. Mr. Belden commented IP should have put that in writing so DEC would allow the County to use the land for snowmobile trails. Mr. Beland apprised there currently was no license agreement with IP because he felt it was unnecessary; however, if the easement negotiations fell through with DEC, he would come back to the committee and request that agreement be executed.

After discussion, the question was called and the motion was carried unanimously approving the request as submitted and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May board meeting. A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Stec added the County did an excellent job assisting the City of Glens Falls and South Warren Snowmobile Club with the trail work up West Mountain Road; however, he said he had concerns about safety issues with the gate. He suggested perhaps the City of Glens Falls could leave the gate permanently open to avoid it closing unexpectedly.

Motion was made by Mr. Stec, seconded by Mr. VanNess and carried unanimously authorizing the chairman of the Board of Supervisors and Mr. Beland, Director of Parks, Recreation and Railroad to draft a letter to Glens Falls City Mayor Akins requesting he address the problem with the gate at the trail head.

Continuing on with the second item on the Agenda, Mr. Beland reported his department received the 30% State voucher in the amount of \$32,619.88 and would like to request that the 2006 County budget be amended to reflect this amount. However, he noted, in the second paragraph of the letter from Victor C. Wood, Senior Natural Resource Planner/Snowmobile Program Administrator, it stated "subject to change". Despite the grant being reduced from 160,000 registered snowmobiles to 150,000, he said he thought the Warren County Snowmobile Clubs would receive these funds.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas and carried unanimously authorizing the request to amend the 2006 County budget as outlined above and request same be forwarded to the Finance Committee. A copy of the resolution request is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Beland reported the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation had simplified the snowmobile grant process. Previously, he explained, if a club received \$20,000 in grant funds, it necessitated the club spending \$150,000 and thereafter submitting a package itemizing all expenses. However, currently the State was requesting verification of only the expenses paid with the grant funding, he stated.

Mr. McClain, President of the Warren County Snowmobile Club Association, distributed copies of the Warren County Snowmobile Clubs expenses for 2005-2006. Without the County contribution, Mr. McClain acknowledged there would be no snowmobile trail

system in Warren County. The second page of the itemized expenses for the clubs, he noted, reflected the trail and County grants leaving a balance of \$145,341 that each club was required to raise to pay their expenses. Mr. Haskell related the members of these clubs were all volunteers and maybe the Supervisors from Lake Luzerne and Horicon could assist with additional funding.

In response to a question by Mr. Stec relative to the funding source of the \$75,000 grant, Mr. Haskell replied it came from the General Fund. Mr. Stec and Mr. Belden recommended utilizing some Occupancy Tax funds; however, Mr. Haskell stated he was advised by the County Attorney that was not possible.

Motion was made by Mr. Stec and seconded by Mr. Belden, requesting the County increase their funding support of the Warren County Snowmobile Clubs for the 2006-2007 winter season from Occupancy Tax funds or if that was not possible, the funding come from the General Fund.

Mr. Stec suggested increasing the \$75,000 Warren County Grant to \$100,000 or \$125,000. Mr. Haskell apprised Hague had just incorporated a snowmobile club; therefore, Mr. Stec recommended the Warren County Grant be increased to \$150,000 and split amongst the four snowmobile clubs.

Mr. W. Thomas entered the meeting at 11:51 a.m.

Mr. O'Connor said he felt at least a portion of the snowmobile funding should come from the Occupancy Tax money. He also noted that the North Warren Club paid their accountant \$305 for their tax return and the Thurman Club paid \$995. He suggested the clubs bid the tax returns together to obtain a lower cost. Mr. McClain said he had no problem with that, but he prepared the returns for the South Warren Club at no cost.

Mr. Gabriels stated the schedule and format for the Occupancy Tax were only recommendations and could not incorporate this type of program. He remarked he would like to make a motion, since the bed tax legislation was being submitted to Albany, encouraging Senator Little and Assemblywoman Sayward to incorporate specific language so these funds could be utilized for these types of projects and/or clearly defined capital improvements.

Motion was made by Mr. Gabriels, seconded by Mr. Stec requesting specific language be incorporated so Occupancy Tax funds could be utilized for projects and/or capital improvements.

Mr. Stec commented this issue was sent back to the floor for renewal but queried whether the information sent to Albany would be renewed for three years or were they requesting it be permanent. In addition, he asked this resolution be forwarded to the Legislative Committee clarifying the language so these types of projects were allowed under the Occupancy Tax Law and the sunset provision be removed.

With respect to increasing the Warren County grant funds from \$75,000 to \$150,000 for the Warren County Snowmobile Clubs, Mr. Haskell called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to request that 2007 funding for the snowmobile clubs be increased to \$150,000.

Regarding the second motion requesting the Occupancy Tax legislation be amended to specify that Occupancy Tax funds could be expended for capital projects and/or improvements, Mr. Haskell called the question and the motion was carried unanimously. The request was referred to the Legislative Committee.

Messrs. W. Thomas and McClain exited the meeting at 11:56 a.m.

Continuing on with Item 4 of the Agenda, Railroad Rehabilitation Project, Mr. Beland stated the project was near completion with the exception of some surfacing work and a ballast issue. He said he was informed an additional 500 tons of ballast had been recommended at a cost of \$5,000. Mr. Haskell asked Mr. Beland to look into some possible funding avenues but stated the project should not be delayed due to a lack of funds.

Referring to Item 5 of the Agenda, Mr. Beland advised the grade crossing warning signals had been approved. However, because the cell phone service is very spotty in that area, Mr. Beland explained there was a computerized system in place to dial the telephone and send a message to the appropriate agency, should a system fail, which was highly unlikely. The Riparius Station had excellent cell phone service, so they would be set up with a cell phone mode if the system failed, Mr. Beland noted. With respect to the area in Hadley from Harris Road to County Route 1, Mr. Beland said the cell service mode would work and those located from the Thurman Station to The Glen would be serviced by an antenna installed at the Fish Hatchery and the message sent via radio.

Mr. Haskell suggested skipping Item 6 on the Agenda and continuing on with the Referrals. Mr. Beland reported No. 1 was still pending. With respect to Item 2, he commented another meeting had been scheduled as there were two issues, construction to the north was impossible due to site distance limitation, and to the south, the track was six foot above grade. He said he had discussed the situation with Mr. Arehart and it was recommended they load/unload from the driveway. Mr. Beland recommended doing the least expensive option they could at this point. Mr. Haskell indicated for liability reasons, Mr. Arehart was not in favor of having a ten foot loading ramp.

Mr. Beland confirmed that next month's meeting would be held at Up Yonda and would include a tour of the facility, lunch and the Committee meeting.

With respect to Antone Mountain Road, Mr. Beland expounded it was not eligible for State funding.

Mr. Haskell mentioned tabling the one item under New Business until next month's meeting.

Mr. Beland requested an executive session to discuss proposed property owner acquisition.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously, that executive session be declared pursuant to Section 105 (h) of the Public Officers Law.

Executive Session was declared from 12:05 p.m. until 12:15 p.m.

Mr. Cronin left the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Committee reconvened.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. VanNess and carried unanimously authorizing Mr. Beland to obtain an appraisal of the caboose at the Riparius station.

Mr. Haskell inquired whether the committee would like to have a picnic at the Warren County Fish Hatchery in August. He anticipated the approximate cost would be \$10 per person and all supervisors and department heads would be invited to attend. General approval of the committee was noted.

Mr. Haskell announced that Mr. Beland would be announcing his retirement in the very near future and asked the Personnel Officer to advertise his position. Since the request to amend Local Law #3 of 2004 had been tabled, the consensus of the Committee was to delay advertising the position until that issue had been resolved.

There being no further business, on motion by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Stec, Mr. Haskell adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marquel Johnson, Legislative Office Specialist